

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6037

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1028

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: PCP VIEWS ON ELECTIONS

SUMMARY: IN PRESS CONFERENCE FEB 14, PCP SECGEN ALVARO CUNHAL SOUGHT TO FORCE SOCIALISTS TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ALLIANCE WITH LEFT OR WITH RIGHT, WHILE LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR JUSTIFYING POOR PCP PERFORMANCE IN ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. PCP ON ELECTIONS: AT PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING FEB 14 MEETING OF PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE, SECGEN ALVARO CUNHAL ANNOUNCED COMMITTEE'S DECISIONS TO:
-- SUPPORT LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE AS A MEANS OF CALMING CURRENT POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND
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FORESTALLING A POSSIBLE RIGHT WING COUP;

-- DEMAND ENERGETIC ANTI-TERRORIST MEASURES TO ENSURE FREEDOM OF ACTION OF ALL POLITICAL PARTIES THROUGHOUT PORTUGAL;

-- PROTEST BOTH THE NOMINATION OF PPD AND PS TECHNICIANS TO THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION AND THE ORGANIZATION OF SEVERAL LOCAL VOTER REGISTRATION BOARDS WITHOUT CONSULTING THE PCP.

2. IN RESPONSE TO JOURNALISTS' QUERIES, CUNHAL SAID THAT SOCIALISTS WOULD BE UNABLE TO WIN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. UNABLE TO GOVERN ALONE, THEY MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN AN ALLIANCE WITH THE RIGHT OR WITH THE LEFT. THEY SHOULD MAKE THIS CHOICE PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS. IN ANY CASE, PCP WOULD NOT BLINDLY SUPPORT THE PS IN THE GOVERNMENT; ITS SUPPORT WOULD BE CONTINGENT UPON OUTCOME OF SUCCESSFUL PRIOR NEGOTIATIONS.

3. PCP SECRETARIAT MEMBER OCTAVIO PATO ALSO ADDRESSED SUBJECT OF ELECTIONS IN FEB 13 PARTY RALLY. PATO EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT "PROGRESSIVE" VOTE WOULD BE DISPERSED AMONG A SUPERABUNDANCE OF LEFTIST AND QUASI- LEFTIST PARTIES. HE ACCUSED THE PPD AND CDS OF SUPPORTING SUCH GROUPS AS THE MAOIST MRPP AND AOC, IN ORDER TO DIVIDE THE LEFT'S ELECTORAL IMPACT.

4. MIRANDELA BOMBING: FIRE AND BOMBING AT PRINTING PLANT IN FAR NORTHERN TOWN OF MIRANDELA CAUSED DEATH OF TWO AND INJURED ANOTHER SEVEN FEB 13. AIDED BY ANGOLAN REFUGEES, OWNER OF PLANT HAD RECENTLY RETAKEN PLANT FROM ITS LEFTIST WORKERS. BOMBING INCIDENT WAS BLAMED ON COMMUNISTS BY MANY CITIZENS IN MIRANDELA, AND EFFORTS WERE MADE TO DRIVE LOCAL COMMUNISTS OUT OF TOWN. POLICE PREVENTED FURTHER VIOLENCE.

5. ELECTION COMMISSION: NATIONAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION (CNE) APPROVED RESOLUTION FEB 16 CALLING ATTENTION TO WAVE OF TERRORIST VIOLENCE WHICH HAS MARRED PRE-ELECTORAL PERIOD. CNE WARNED THAT SUCH ACTS IMPAIR CENSUS ACTIVITIES, AND
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LIMIT EQUAL ACCESS OF POLITICAL GROUPS TO VOTER. CNE ASKED MINISTRY OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION TO PROVIDE PERMANENT SECURITY FOR PARTY OFFICES. CNE ALSO REQUESTED MINISTRY OF JUSTICE TO SPEED INVESTIGATIONS OF POLITICAL VANDALISM.

6. COMMENT: THRUST OF CUNHAL'S COMMENTS IS TWO-FOLD. ON THE ONE HAND HE IS CONTINUING HIS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE

A UNITED FRONT FROM BELOW WITH THE PS B FORCING SOCIALIST
LEADERSHIP TO CLEARLY OPT FOR LEFT OR RIGHT. ON THE
OTHER, HE IS LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR JUSTIFYING
A POOR COMMUNIST SHOWING IN THE ELECTIONS BY EMPHASIZING
THEIR INABILITY TO CONDUCT A PROPER CAMPAIGN. ELECTION
COMMISSION STATEMENT INDICATES GOP WILL DO ITS BEST TO
DISCREDIT THIS ARGUMENT.
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